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ABSTRACT

The guide provides a conceptual framework for teaching cultural awareness and intercultural adjustment skills. Designed in the context of an intensified English second language program, the approach is recommended for students at the intermediate or advanced levels of language learning or for monocultural classes. In this approach, four stages of cultural awareness are identified, and within each stage, general skills to be developed. The first stage involves recognition of the existence and pervasive influence of culture. The primary skill to be developed here is non-judgmental observation. The second stage is characterized by either acceptance or rejection of cultural differences, and the skills to be developed at this stage focus on coping with ambiguity. The third stage concerns achievement of attitudes on a continuum from ethnocentrism to cultural integration. To achieve a bicultural perspective at this stage, the ability to empathize must be developed. Transcendence, or appreciation of one's own as well as others' cultures, is the final stage of cultural awareness, and the skills to be cultivated concern the ability to respect. For each stage, a set of classroom exercises targeting the appropriate skill area is suggested. An introductory section offers suggestions on classroom teaching technique. (MSE)

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Cultural Awareness Teaching Techniques

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Resource Handbook Number 4

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Preface

The Blind Men and the Elephant

A Hindoo Fable

It was six men of Indostan
  To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
  (Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
  Might satisfy his mind.

The **First** approached the Elephant,
  And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
  At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
  Is very like a wall!"

The **Second** feeling of the tusk,
  Cried, "Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
  To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
  Is very like a spear!"

The **Third** approached the animal,
  And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
  Thus boldly up and spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
  Is very like a snake!"

The **Fourth** reached out an eager hand,
  And felt about the knee,
"What most this wondrous beast is like
  Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
  Is very like a tree!"

The **Fifth** who chanced to touch the ear,
  Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
  Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
  Is very like a fan!"

The **Sixth** no sooner had begun
  About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
  That fell within his scope,
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
  Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan
  Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
  Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
  And all were in the wrong!

The Moral:

So oft in theologic wars,
  The disputants, I ween,
Rail on in utter ignorance
  Of what each other mean,
And prate about an Elephant
  Not one of them has seen!

John Godfrey Saxe

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Sincere thanks to the students and my colleagues at the School for International Training who have helped give form to these ideas and activities. Technique 11, "Artifacts," is my version of an idea I borrowed from Wendlyl Wason. Some of my ideas were first expressed in my own article "Cultural Orientation in the English as a Second Language Classroom." I have also quoted from Don Batchelder's article "The Green Banana," and I have adapted a section from Ted Gochenour's description of "The Owl." All these articles are taken from Beyond Experience, edited by Donald Batchelder and Elizabeth G. Warner.*

Jan Gaston

*Beyond Experience was originally published by The Experiment in International Living. A revised edition is due to be published in 1993 by Intercultural Press. It has been, and hopefully will be, available from Pro Lingua Associates.

Introduction

It is through the knowledge of languages and cultures that we best begin to know and comprehend the scope and significance of human experience in history, from ancient times to modern; it is through the knowledge of languages and cultures that we best learn to tolerate and appreciate cultural and linguistic diversity at home, to understand our contemporaries abroad and so achieve our full potential as citizens of the world.*

Cultural Awareness and Communication

We live in a time when the need for understanding and mutual respect across cultural boundaries is imperative. Implicit in the achievement of understanding and respect is the successful interchange between two human beings that we call communication. Language is, of course, a key component of communication, and although the accurate use of linguistic forms is necessary for effective communication, in most communicative situations, the communicators do more than simply talk to each other in grammatically well-constructed sentences; there has to be familiarity with the culture of the language being used by the communicators.

---

* From **"Language Competence and Cultural Awareness in the United States:** A Statement of the Position of the Joint National Committee for Languages and the Council for Language and other International Studies."

Introduction

Even between two fluent speakers of the same language there has to be some awareness of cultural differences. I still remember the parting words from a Nigerian student of mine who assured me "I will remember you until tomorrow." I understood his sentiment because I was aware that the English word "tomorrow" in a Nigerian context was a much less definite time expression than the day that follows today--or at least I hope so. The point is that language and culture, as we all know, are linked together and that communication, even between two people speaking the same language can be difficult if there is a cultural difference between the two speakers.

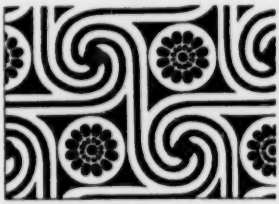
For the average person, a complete assimilation of a second culture may be even more impossible than speaking with flawless grammar and accurate pronunciation. What may be more realistic and valuable than striving for total assimilation of the target culture is the development of an awareness of culture and the intercultural skills that one develops on the way to cultural awareness.

Cultural Awareness and Intercultural Adjustment Skills

The goal of the teaching techniques collected in this book is cultural awareness, and although the term cultural awareness is not a new one in the field of language teaching, it may be useful to begin with a brief definition of the concept of cultural awareness as it is used in this book. Cultural awareness can be seen as the recognition that culture affects perception and that culture influences values, attitudes and behavior. The development of this awareness can be described as having four sequential stages leading ideally toward toleration and appreciation of cultural diversity.

Intercultural adjustment skills are a range of skills that are implicit in the concept of cultural awareness. These skills must be developed if we are to adjust to living in a new culture or even travel comfortably through a new culture. The concern of the language teacher becomes, then, the development of skills as well as awareness.

In fact, one could make the case that the skills must be developed before an awareness will develop. Using the four stages of cultural awareness as a basis, we can describe four general skills that must be developed at each stage in the process.



STAGE ONE, RECOGNITION. At this stage we recognize the existence and pervasive influence of culture. For most of us, this begins with the growing consciousness of our own cultural group, and except for those individuals in extremely isolated cultural groups, we also begin to recognize the existence of other cultures. A pronouncement such as "I am an American" is the starting point, and implicit in this statement is the recognition that Americans do things in a particular way. Simultaneously, the concept of foreigner also begins to have meaning, and at this stage there is the recognition that foreigners do things differently. As we develop, so does our recognition that cultural differences are not only obvious and concrete (food, shelter, clothing), but subtle and abstract (values, attitudes, mores) as well. It is probably safe to say that as our recognition of foreign cultures increases, so too does our conscious recognition of our own cultural heritage.

At the recognition stage, the key skill is **non-judgemental observation.** This is the ability to see and describe culture with minimal judgement that what is seen is good or bad or right or wrong. In other words, we should avoid quick and easy labelling of cultural behavior as "funny" or "dumb" or "backward" or "progressive." Ideally, the intercultural traveller takes on the attitude of a scientist who simply reports what he sees. The first step toward understanding is seeing clearly.

STAGE TWO, ACCEPTANCE/REJECTION. Almost simultaneously with our recognition of culture and cultural differences there is a reaction that is most often either positive or negative. Again the techniques in this book attempt to encourage a neutral, non-judgemental attitude of acceptance, but in fact what often occurs is rebellion against our own culture or rejection of the foreign culture.

The set of skills we hope to develop during this acceptance/rejection stage can be labelled **coping with ambiguity.** When we become aware of the fact that there is more than one way to behave or more than one way to organize society, it becomes necessary to live with a certain amount of ambiguity until we see enough of the total picture to see how the various pieces of the cultural puzzle fit together.

STAGE THREE, INTEGRATION/ETHNOCENTRISM. At this stage we reach either a somewhat more sophisticated point of view where we begin to act and think biculturally or, at the other extreme, we solidify our monocultual point of view into rigid ethnocentrism. For the ethnocentric individual, the road toward cultural awareness has come to an end.

At this third stage, where we have started to come to terms with the culture in an intercultural situation, we are beginning to develop into a bi-cultural being who is not only becoming more fluent in the language but is also beginning to take on a second identity. To achieve biculturalism, we must develop a set of skills that can be called the **ability to empathize.** This involves not only projecting ourselves into the role of a person in the target culture, but it also requires a willingness to let go of our close identity with our native culture. In the face of an impending identity crisis, when questions such as "Who am I, after all?" begin to emerge, our self image as "a 100% American," for example, must be sacrificed in order to embrace a new identity.

STAGE FOUR, TRANSCENDENCE. When we reach the final stage of cultural awareness, we are able to value and appreciate our own cultural roots, whether they are native or acquired, and also to value and appreciate all other cultures as well. At this level of understanding, however, we are also able to transcend particular cultures and see their individual weaknesses and strengths, to become, in effect, a citizen of the world, searching for universals but also valuing the vitality and variety of earth's cultures.

Finally, after we have reached the point where we can transcend culture and see ourselves as a product of culture, but no longer a prisoner of culture, and when we can see the strengths and weaknesses of the cultures we embrace, we need a set of skills that can be labelled the **ability to respect.** This is what understanding is all about. It is important to note, however, that the ability to respect still allows for disagreement and criticism. We can, after all, adopt an attitude of "live and let live" while both showing respect for another way of doing things and questioning whether it is the only or best way.

The four stages outlined above are, of course, an idealized version of a process that in fact is not neatly separable into distinct phases like the metamorphosis of caterpillar to butterfly. For example, a strong case may be made for saying that stages one and two are really two aspects of an initial stage that could be called recognition and reaction. But because one of the objectives of this collection of techniques is to encourage people to withhold judgement, recognition and reaction have been separated. The point, however, is that these four stages are postulated to allow the teacher and students to focus attention on specific skills and attitudes that collectively lead toward cultural awareness in an orderly way.

More importantly, however, we should remind ourselves on a daily basis that theories and frameworks such as the four stages of cultural aware-

ness apply only to an idealized student, and that the students in our classrooms are individuals who not only look different from each other, but also think, feel and grow in ways that never quite match the idealized "we" of the preceding paragraphs. Ultimately, the journey toward cultural awareness is made by individuals who, like the six blind men in Saxe's poem in the preface, may never know the whole truth or the best answer, but whose handicap should not prevent them from the search.

Applicability of the Techniques

The techniques presented in this book were developed in an intensive English program conducted in the U.S. Furthermore, the composition of the classes in which these techniques were developed was of students from a variety of linguistic/cultural backgrounds. This kind of class lends itself most easily to the goal of developing cultural awareness because there is a variety of cultures represented in the class. However, throughout this book the author has suggested ways in which the techniques can be used effectively with monocultural classes.

In general, the techniques will be most effective with students who have an intermediate/advanced command of the target language because discussion/ conversation is a key activity in most of the 20

techniques. Secondly, when the entire collection of techniques is used as a sequenced program, the program should be used in the context of a teaching/learning situation where the target language is spoken in the immediate environment. Techniques 16-18, for example, do require extramural excursions as one part of the techniques.

To present the techniques in this book in the clearest and most specific way, they are described as techniques for an English as a second language classroom in the U.S. But with modification, the techniques can easily be used in a variety of situations, from teaching French in France, for example, or even with additional modification, teaching any foreign language in an environment where the language is not widely spoken outside the classroom. For that matter, these techniques can also be adapted for use in a social studies class or in a course on cultural awareness where there is no second language component. And although the techniques can be used with very little modification by teachers of English as a second language in the U.S. with a multicultural class, the description of the technique should be viewed as a suggested way to do things, and not as the only way or even the best way, for as we all know, no two classes are ever alike.

As desirable as cultural awareness may be, from the teacher's point of view, it must be remembered, that most students come to the language classroom with a more mundane motive--to learn a language. The teaching of cultural awareness needs to be approached, therefore, with a certain amount of caution. If the students are not ready for classroom work that seems to be irrelevant or superfluous to the goal of learning a language, an indirect approach may work better; most students will readily accept the techniques in this book as a form of conversation practice. And of course, these techniques for the teaching of cultural awareness will, in fact, promote language learning, especially because the activities are carried out in the context of a language classroom and under the guidance of a language teacher.

Sequence and Format of the Techniques

The twenty techniques in this book are arranged in a sequence that generally follows the four stages of cultural awareness. The overall goal of the first five techniques is to begin the process of cultural awareness by introducing students to the concept that culture pervades our lives and that cultures are organized in different ways. The students are asked to examine their own cultures and make comparisons with the target culture and, if applicable, with the cultures of other students in the class. During this phase, the skill of non-judgemental observation is introduced and practiced.

The second group of five techniques focuses on reactions to cultural differences and gives the students the opportunity to practice the skill of coping with ambiquity in a constructive way.

In the third group of five techniques, the students are encouraged to accept selected aspects of the target culture by participating in the culture as fully as they can while simultaneously surrendering some of their own culturally-bound ways of behaving.

The final five give the students the opportunity not only to learn more about the target culture, but also to build an attitude of intelligent and liberated respect for cultures, both their own and others. The last two techniques in particular are designed to leave the students with a general set of skills and attitudes that will carry over into future intercultural

experiences, whether in the target culture or in cultures yet to be encountered in the student's future.

The format for presenting the techniques in this book is a reflection of a basic premise of experiential education. First, the students are introduced to a structured experience--one that may take place either within the four walls of the classroom or outside in the real world. Then with the assignment and guidelines firmly in hand, they are asked to do something, and finally, with the teacher's guidance they are asked to reflect upon what they have done and arrive at conclusions. The numbered procedural steps, the heart of each technique, reflect these three stages. The last numbered step in the procedure is labelled "synthesis" to emphasize the importance of the final step. The synthesis is also closely related to the objectives which are stated at the beginning of each technique. Although the objectives are not stated as classic behavioral objectives, they and the concluding synthesis are based on the concept that learning can be facilitated if there is a clear statement of what is to be learned and a conclusion that in some way shows that in fact something has (or has not) been learned.

The sequenced procedural steps are accompanied by explanatory notes from the author. She uses her own experience with these techniques to give the reader further detail on how to conduct the techniques, and she offers suggestions on how to adapt them to specific teaching situations. Implicit in her suggestions is the notion that the user of these techniques must, in fact, use them only as general guidelines and must constantly make her own adaptations to fit the unique aspects of her own teaching situation.

Raymond C. Clark

Suggestions for the Teacher

General Teaching Suggestions

A few additional suggestions of a general nature should be kept in mind to help insure the success of these techniques in the classroom.

First, establish and maintain a comfortable, non-threatening atmosphere in which the students will be willing to take risks and express themselves. As the teacher you can foster a comfortable classroom environment by being a non-judgemental reflective listener. This implies accepting student responses and taking them seriously, even though you may not personally agree with what a student is saying. You can encourage the students to take risks by occasionally taking risks yourself, and you can guard against unnecessary tension by injecting humor from time to time.

A second suggestion is to be as clear as possible about the objective of each technique so that the students know the "why" of what they are doing. At the conclusion of each technique, you should also find an opportunity to refer to the objective, and together with the students make an assessment of whether you have achieved the objective.

Finally, keep in mind that your students are individuals and they not only respond differently to what you are doing, but they progress at different rates, not only as language learners, but also as human beings adjusting to and assimilating a new culture.

Suggestions For The Teacher

Suggestions for Leading a Discussion

Because discussion is an activity that is central to the success of all the techniques in this collection, the following suggestions for leading discussions may prove helpful.

The purpose and ground rules of discussion will vary from culture to culture, making it important at the beginning of any series of cultural awareness techniques to talk about discussions. Some leading questions for doing this are:

What is a discussion?

What is the goal of a discussion?

How is a discussion conducted?

How do you feel about discussion?

If the students represent a variety of cultural backgrounds, this discussion of discussions should at least lead toward some recognition that a group of people talking together about a common topic can operate in different ways. Because you are asking the class to take part in discussion, your own view of the purpose and procedure of discussion should also be presented, although tactically it may be best for you to save your views on discussion until the students have expressed their views.

After the initial clarification of the purpose of discussions, the next step is to establish some ground rules for the class. Because discussion is by nature participatory and democratic, it follows that the ground rules themselves should be established as democratically as possible. In most cases, the class's ground rules will result in agreements and rules such as these:

The discussion should (or should not) have a leader.

The leader will be chosen in this way:

Suggestions For The Teacher

The role of the teacher will be:

How, when, and where will mistakes in the language be corrected, if at all.

Only one person speaks at a time.

Everyone is expected to participate; this includes speaking as well as listening.

Participants are free to ask each other questions.

Participants are free to give their ideas and opinions, and these are respected by everyone in the group.

Disagreement is not a rejection of another person.

It is helpful to post these rules in the classroom for later reference and possible revision.

Once the ground rules are established and posted, two additional ground rules for the teacher should be kept in mind. First, before each discussion begins it is imperative that the class understands what is being discussed and why it is being discussed. Writing the topic in large letters on the board is one way of helping to focus the discussion. One of the great problems with discussion, as we all know, is straying from the topic.

A second useful ongoing procedure is to review the discussion process itself periodically. It can be initiated by reference to the ground rules to see if they are being followed or not and to see if there are changes to be made. This periodic evaluation is also useful for bringing out problems in the dynamics of participant interchange. Sometimes, for example, someone is being excluded, or there may be a participant who is dominating or intimidating others. Or someone may not be participating. Whatever the problem, it may not come to the surface unless there is a structured opportunity for it to do so.

Suggestions For The Teacher

Finally, here are a few tips for facilitating discussions.

Give the students a few moments to think about and organize their answers and responses. Sometimes hesitation to speak indicates only that the student is groping for words and ways to express his thoughts.

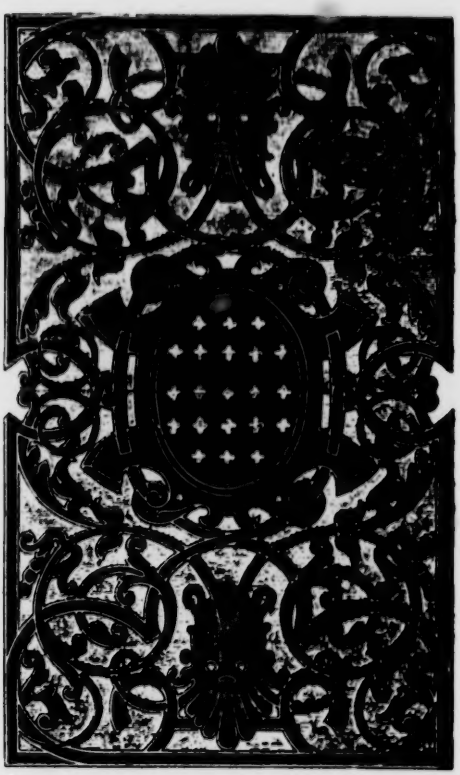
Be very quick to spot dominators and, if necessary, take them aside to talk about their domination. Sometimes, of course, dominators are simply the most fluent members of the class.

Lack of participation does not necessarily mean a student has no opinion or he is not interested in the discussion. Some students appreciate being called on.

Being a non-participating observer is an excellent opportunity to listen not to what the students are saying, but how they are saying it. For that reason, it is helpful from time to time to have someone else lead the class while you detach yourself from the discussion and take notes on your students' linguistic problems.

Although discussion is a critical part of these techniques, sometimes a discussion format just doesn't work very well with a particular class. In that event it is a mistake to insist on discussion, but you don't have to give up on doing cultural awareness sessions. The discussion can simply be replaced by a teacher-led question and answer session, instead of a discussion.

If the class is multicultural, there may be, despite the class ground rules, some deep-seated cultural bases for problems in classroom dynamics. These problems won't easily and quickly go away; they have to be accepted with understanding and patience. Although the process of cultural awareness leads toward transcendence of and liberation from culturally-based behavior, the process takes time.



1.

Family Tree

The students draw diagrams of the structures of their families. They question each other about their families, leading to an awareness of how their cultures shape the concept of "family."

Objective

To show that the concept and structure of "family" is influenced by one's culture.

Procedure

1. The students draw their family trees.

This step can be done in class or assigned as homework.

This technique runs more smoothly if the students know the vocabulary for family relationships. Therefore I usually go over the vocabulary at some point during this step.

To help the students get started, I sometimes draw a sample family tree on the blackboard. However, I encourage them to be creative and to design their own trees. I usually participate in this exercise along with the students.

If all the students are from one culture, this exercise can still be effective. For example, in a class of Brazilians, one person had Japanese parents while another's parents were German, and that turned out to be an interesting way for these students to learn about the diversity in their own country. Even if students from the same country come from similar family backgrounds, this exercise still allows them to become aware of their perceptions of "family."

2. **Post the drawings for the students to study.**

3. **The students ask each other questions about their families.**

   It is important to keep the students on the topic of their families.

4. **Lead a discussion on the subject of families. Focus questions:**

   a. **When you use the word "family," whom do you include?**

   b. **Where were your parents, grandparents and great-grandparents born?**

      This question can reveal diversities and similarities among different cultures, or within one culture.

   c. **Do you think the size of your family is common in your country? Are there places in your country where families are smaller or larger?**

   d. **Is the way your family lives and relates similar to most other families in your country? In what ways is it similar or different?**

      Before students answer this question, I usually give them a few minutes to think. First, they have to think about how their own families live and then about how that relates to other families.

In the discussion, I especially watch for an assumption that every family in a particular country relates in the same way. Sometimes this assumption can stifle others from the same country who have a different background.

Synthesis

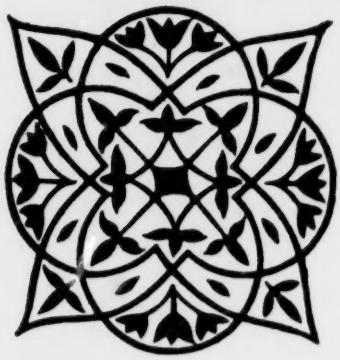
5. **Each student makes concluding statements based on the objectives of the exercise.**

   I find it helpful to use a clear focus question. Some possibilities are:

   a. What did you learn about your view of your family?

   b. Why are there differences in the way families are structured?

2.



Home

The students draw floor plans for their homes and discuss the similarities and differences.

Objective

To discover and compare the different ways people organize and use one of man's basic needs: Shelter.

Procedure

1. **Each student is given a large piece of paper and asked to draw a floor plan of his house, including some of the major pieces of furniture.**

   At first glance this exercise may seem simplistic but it gives the students the opportunity to talk about something familiar and personal while beginning to see that culture has a definite role in how we define and create "home."

   I would suggest that you do your own floor plan and present yours first as a model for others to follow. A lot of detail on furniture is not necessary.

   If your class is composed of immigrants, you might ask them to draw two floor plans--one of their home as it was in the native country and one of their home in this country. In this case, in Step 3 you might want to ask students to compare the similarities and differences in their two homes.

If your class is all one nationality, Step 2 may serve the purpose of sharing personal information and Step 3 could include similarities and differences between their drawings and yours.

2. **Each student is given a limited amount of time to show and describe his house.**

With a small group, give everyone a limited amount of time to describe his home, and with a large group, ask the students to form groups of 4-5. In either case, it will help the students in their own descriptions and attempts to find commonalities and differences with others if you explain your drawing first. Try to help the students get beneath a superficial description by asking them to include information about what happens in each room:

Which rooms seem to be central?

Which rooms serve more than one function?

How does the house reflect the need for privacy?

Who uses the different rooms?

3. **Ask the students to identify similarities and differences among their drawings.**

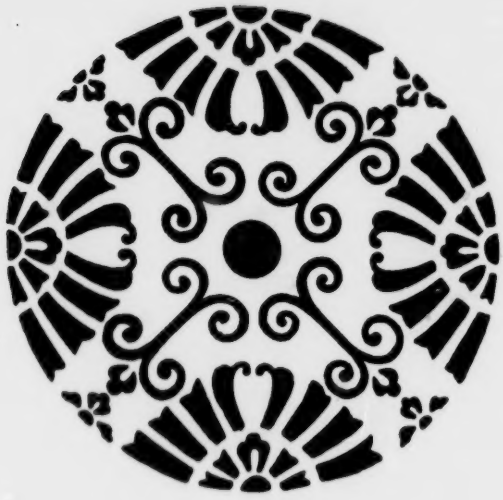
It might be helpful to put some of the responses on the board to focus the discussion in this step and in Step 4.

Synthesis

4. **Ask each student to look for something unique in his own floor plan and something that seems unique in some of his classmates' plans. Secondly, have them speculate on the reasons for the unique features they identified.**

I like to allow the students a few minutes silently planning their summaries before I ask them to make synthesizing statements.

3.



Observation and Interpretation

The students list a number of observations about the target culture. They examine their observations to see which ones could be interpretations.

Objective

To establish the difference between observation and interpretation.

To realize that oversimplifications (e.g., "All Americans are rich.") are unfair and limiting.

Procedure

1. **The students make a list of observations they have made about living and studying in the target culture.**

In order to help the students get started, I give them some examples of areas about which they can make observations, e.g., food, relationships, dress, nonverbal communication.

2. **Select a few statements from each student and write them down so that everyone can easily see them.**

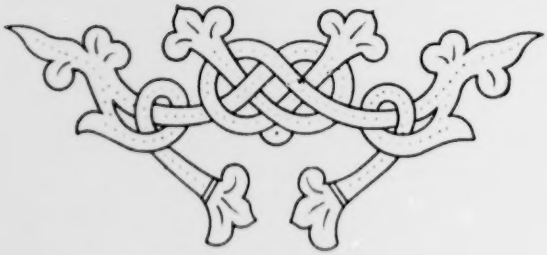
   Because we will use the board in the next step, I write these observations on a flip chart. Rolls of brown wrapping paper are also useful for this kind of work.

3. **Establish definitions for observation and interpretation.**

   I write the words "observation" and "interpretation" on the board and ask the students to give a definition and examples of both. Or, I write up an example of an observation and an interpretation on the board and ask the group to describe the difference between the two statements. An example might be: "American food is terrible" (interpretation) and "Americans do not generally use hot spices in their food" (observation). Another example might be: "People here are unfriendly" (interpretation) and "People here generally say 'Hi' and continue walking" (observation).

4. **Ask the students to identify which of their statements in Step 2 are observations and which are interpretations. Then have the students change the interpretations to observations.**

   It is important in this step that the students realize the difference between observations and interpretations. Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate, and the students may find this in some of their examples. If there is disagreement as to whether a statement is one or the other, simply ask the student who believes it is an interpretation to change it to an observation. The act of changing these statements clearly demonstrates the focus of this exercise.



Synthesis

5. **Conclude with a discussion of the following questions:**

   a. **Why is it important to know and practice the difference between observation and interpretation?**

   b. **How can you improve your own skills in observing?**

   The experience of changing statements in Step 4 is often powerful because the difference between the two becomes clear, and the participants begin to see the implications of interpreting and observing. The questions in this step give the students the opportunity to deepen their understanding of the difference and to make some generalizations about what they have learned.

4.

Cultural Statements

Each student brings to class something from his culture that is personally meaningful.

Objectives

To share a personally meaningful aspect of one's own culture.

To begin defining the characteristic of one's own culture.

To promote appreciation and respect for the individuals in the class and their backgrounds.

Cultural Statements

Procedure

1. **Each student brings something to class which is both personally meaningful and representative of some aspect of his culture.**

   I give the students a day or two to think about the assignment and choose something that is personally meaningful. They may not be able to find an object, but they could bring a picture.

   It would be helpful to give some personal examples. They might be:

   Pictures of your hometown.

   A book of your favorite poems.

   An article of clothing.

   A picture of a national monument.

   A handcrafted object.

   The purpose of this step is for the students to think about their own cultures and begin defining what it means to be from a particular culture.

   If the students in the class are from the same culture, the directions for this step would be the same, but you might want to ask the students not to talk about the assignment with each other outside of class.

2. **One by one the students show what they have brought and speak about it.**

   Set a time limit for each presentation.

   This is not really a time for students to ask each other questions about each other's cultures. It is a time to listen to others sharing something personal. Therefore, I don't allow the listeners to ask questions.

Synthesis

3. **After everyone has made their presentations, ask them to discuss what they have seen and heard.**

   Give the students a minute or two to think about what they have seen and heard. To guide the discussion, these questions might be helpful:

   a. What is one thing (either personal or cultural) that you have learned from each person in the class?

   b. What did you learn about your own culture in doing this exercise?

5.

Short Readings

A short reading serves as the basis for a written and oral exploration of cultural differences and cultural adjustment.

Objective

To compare a single aspect of one's own and the target culture.

To begin looking at the cultural adjustment process.

Procedure

1. **Give the students a short article on some aspect of U.S. culture to read.**

   For the purposes of this exercise, I prefer articles that go beyond the level of information and get at attitudes and values. A list of topics and a specific example are given after the synthesis of this technique.

2. Ask the students to write an article on the same topic about their own culture.

The initial article given to the students can serve as a model for their own articles. You may want to give the students a definite limit or length. Encourage them to think first; then write.

If your students are all from the same culture, ask them to write on the same topic without discussing the topic with others in the class. Different points of view will still emerge from the assignment.

3. Reproduce all the articles and give the students an opportunity to read them.

Before reproducing the articles, consider these three options in regard to correction:

a. Reproduce the articles as they were turned in, with no changes.

b. Change only the problems that might cause confusion or misunderstanding.

c. Correct everything (If you choose this option, you may want to offer the students the opportunity to rewrite their articles).

4. Ask the students to write two or three questions they would like to ask about one of the other articles.

Writing out the questions often helps the students get beyond superficial reading. If your group is from the same culture, ask them to write a list of the similarities and differences found among the articles.

5. The students ask each other their questions.

For a monocultural group, ask them to compare their culture with U.S. culture. This can lead into a discussion of adjustment problems, as suggested in the next step.

Synthesis

6. **Ask the students to discuss these two questions:**

   a. **Considering only the topic of our articles, if you were going to visit each other's cultures, what would be similar and what would be different?**

   b. **What would you have to adjust to?**

   c. **Do you think that adjustment would be easy or difficult for you?**

SUGGESTED TOPICS

Clothing	Crime	Life Style
Eating Habits	Health	Patriotism
Fads	Heroes	Sex
Family	Holidays	Sports Events
Food	Humor	

SAMPLE ARTICLE

SMALLTOWN DAILY, March

Students Prepare for Spring Vacation

By BILL LOHMANN

•••DAYTONA BEACH, Florida (UPI) — It's time for the annual spring pilgrimage to Florida. Thousands of college students are packing their bags, leaving the cold north and traveling south.

About one million students will spend part of March or April in Florida, forgetting their books, problems and sometimes their manners. They eat like bears, drink like fish, and search for sun, fun and sex.

Thousands will go to Fort Lauderdale, but most (about 300,000) will go to Daytona Beach. In spite of inflation and recession, more students are expected this year than last year. "Students aren't affected by the economy," said an author of a guide book to Florida.

In order to save money, six or seven students will stay in one hotel room, or stay in a tent at a campground. And many students sleep on the beach during the day and wander the streets at night.

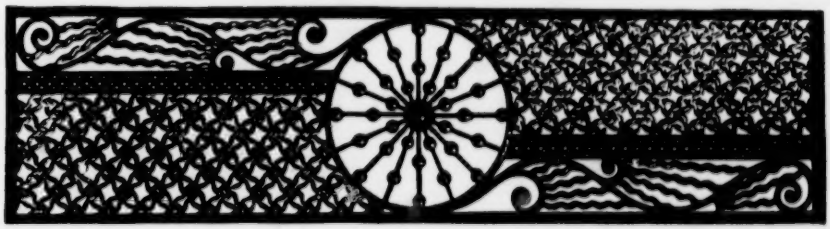
Though most of the students aren't rich, local merchants welcome them. If each students spent only $100 during his stay on Daytona Beach, that would add $30 million into the area's economy. "The community is very glad they're here," said one businessman.

But the student invasion makes life difficult for the police. "The majority of them are decent kids just down here to have a good time," said one policeman. "But it takes only one jerk and we've got a problem."

One woman who has worked for thirty-two years as a bartender believes that every spring is basically the same, though the students change. "If you've seen one spring break, you've seen them all," she said. "It's insane all the time."

Taken from Smalltown Daily, John Miller and Raymond C. Clark, Pro Lingua Associates, Brattleboro, VT, 1984.

6. Nonverbal Interviews



In pairs, the students interview each other nonverbally. Information learned about each other as well as the experience of the exercise, is shared in the group.

Objectives

To learn about others in the class and their countries.

To become aware that communication in new situations, particularly when a new language is involved, can be frustrating and ambiguous. It often requires creating some new ways of conveying meaning.

Procedure

1. **The students pair up and interview each other nonverbally.**

   Large pieces of paper should be posted around the room and magic markers made available. Explain that everyone will have a partner, and these two people will find out as much as they can about each other (including information about each other's countries).

But these interviews must happen nonverbally. Each pair will use one of the large pieces of paper and draw pictures, but they cannot write words or numbers. When this part of the exercise is finished, the students will briefly tell the rest of the class what they learned about their partners.

I give the students 20-25 minutes. This may seem like a long time, but it forces the students to find out more about each other and to devise new and more creative ways of conveying meaning and information. I also tell the students when half the time has passed and remind them that the object of the exercise is to find out information about each other. Sometimes, one of the partners will dominate. When the time is up, give the students a few minutes to walk around and look at the other papers.

2. The students give information about their partners to the rest of the group.

The students are learning more about each other and checking to see if they gave and received clear messages. It is not uncommon in this step that some of the information may be inaccurate. If this happens, be sure to allow the students to give the correct information about themselves and their countries.

3. Lead a discussion based on the following questions:

a. How did you feel during this exercise?

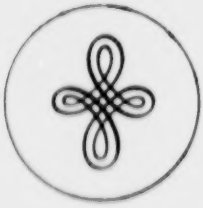
Some typical responses are: tired, confused, excited, anxious, silly.

b. Was it easy or difficult for you to communicate without words? Why?

c. What problems did you have in trying to communicate?

Some typical responses to this question are: "different interpretations," "no clear way to express a particular message," "one misunderstanding affected the communication that followed."

4. **Write some of the responses to questions a. and c. on the board to guide the discussion in the next step.**



Synthesis

5. **Ask the students to reflect and comment on the purpose of this exercise.**

I find it helpful to begin this discussion by asking the students to recall their first week in the U.S., beginning with their arrival at the airport. After giving them a minute to think, refer to the responses on the board. In a group discussion, ask if they had any of the same feelings (question a.) and any of the same problems (question c.). Encourage the students to give brief examples from their own experiences.

Conclude by stating the second objective of this technique and then give an example or two from the students' experiences to help make the objective clear.

7.

Picture Drawing

The students are shown a picture and asked to reproduce it from memory. The various reproductions are examined and discussed, leading toward the conclusion that we perceive the world differently, according to our personal and cultural backgrounds.

Objective

To show that a common experience often results in different perceptions, and that what we perceive is shaped by our previous experience.

Procedure

1. **The teacher shows a picture to the class, allowing them to look at it for one minute.**

   I try to use a picture, photograph or slide of a countryside scene, one that is not familiar to the students and not too complex. If the picture is too busy, the students' discussion might focus more on the objects than on the similarities and differences they find in each others' drawings.

If the group is large, I ask the students to break into smaller groups (even numbers if possible), each group with its own picture.

2. **The teacher removes the picture from view and the students each draw from memory.**

   As an additional option, depending on the students' language ability, I ask them to write a paragraph describing what they saw.

   In giving the instructions to draw a picture, I reassure the students that this exercise is not a drawing contest. The purpose is not to choose the prettiest or most accurate original.

3. **The students find a partner and compare their drawings.**

   There is often some initial nervousness and laughter as the students show each other their drawings.

4. **The teacher asks the pairs of students to identify the similarities and differences they found in their drawings.**

5. **After the paired discussions, each student is asked to identify what he was particularly attracted to in the picture.**

   After this step, I have everybody look at all the drawings.

6. **The teacher leads the class in a discussion of the exercise.**

   Some leading questions are:

   a. What did you find when you compared your drawing to someone else's?

   b. Why do you think you drew things that were different from your partner's?

c. What attracted you in the picture? Do you know why? What effect did this have on your perception of the total picture?

7. The class is shown the original drawing again and asked to compare it silently with their own drawings.

It is important for the students to have the opportunity to compare their drawings with the original, but I try to help them avoid judgements about how "right" or "wrong" their drawings are. I encourage them to see what they emphasized in their own drawings.

Synthesis

8. The class reflects on the objective of the exercise.

This step can be done in a variety of ways. Generally, I ask the students two questions and give them a few minutes to think about and write their responses. The questions:

a. What was the purpose of this exercise?

b. What did you learn?

By asking the class to think through and write out their answers, the final discussion is often more to the point.

8. Country Talks

Individually or as a team, the students give talks about their countries. After all the countries have been presented, a summary discussion focuses on cultural relativity.

Objectives

To increase knowledge and awareness of the specific cultures in the classroom.

To introduce the concept of cultural relativity (each culture has its own particular view of what is "real").

Procedure

1. **Using the classroom walls, put up a large piece of paper for each country represented in the class. The name of a country is written at the top of the paper.**

   This exercise requires at least two countries to be represented in the class.

2. **Ask the students to move around the room and write questions they might have on each of the countries. The questions are written on the large pieces of paper, i.e., all questions for Saudi Arabia are written on the paper marked Saudi Arabia.**

Explain this exercise to the students a day or two before it is done in class. Ask them to be thinking of questions they have for each country. I usually include a sheet for the U.S. so that the students have the opportunity to question me.

During this phase of the exercise, I help the students formulate their questions. I find the questions vary considerably. Some examples from groups I have worked with are:

a. "Do you have television in Brazil?"

b. "Why are Japanese people so quiet?"

c. "What is the structure of the government in Mexico?"

d. "How do the people in your country feel about nuclear weapons?"

3. Once the questions are written, give the students an opportunity to read all of them. Then allow time for questions of clarification on what has been written.

If the class is small, it is possible to focus on each paper one at a time. Questions on grammar may also come up at this time.

4. Each individual or team representing a country is given an assigned class period to respond to the questions with a country talk.

Depending on the language ability of the group, class sessions usually range from 30-60 minutes. There is no single best pattern for scheduling these sessions--one a day or one or two a week. If they are spaced too far apart, the students might lose a sense of continuity and purpose.

Encourage the students to use visuals in their presentation.

If there is more than one person representing a country, suggest that they meet as a group to plan their session. This is often not an

easy task because the students soon find that even though they are from the same country, their perspectives on their country differ. You may want to meet with them briefly to help them solve their differences and work together.

For the actual presentation, ask the students not to write a speech and read it. Ask them to bring notes and speak spontaneously.

Generally, I note language problems and use this information in later language lessons. At times, students have asked me to write down errors as they were speaking and afterwards we met to discuss them. At other times I have given students the option of recording their talks on tape and then meeting afterwards to review the tape for language errors.

Synthesis

5. **When all the presentations have been made, give the students time to write or just think about these questions; then follow up with a class discussion.**

   a. **What did you learn about the other countries represented in the class?**

   b. **Have you changed any of your opinions or impressions of the countries?**

   c. **What did you learn about your country from the questions of others?**

   d. **What was the purpose of this exercise?**

9.

Stereotypes

The students engage in stereotyping each other and then talk through the cause and effect of stereotypes.

Objectives

To define "stereotypes" and identify where they originate.

To understand the effect stereotypes have on our perception of and relationships with others.

Procedure

1. Ask the class what a stereotype is.

It might be helpful to the students if their responses are written up on the board where

everyone can see them. It is important that the students understand the meaning of stereotype before going on.

Another variation that I use is a picture that depicts a stereotype. After the students have studied it, I ask them about it: "What do you see in the picture?" "What does the picture say?"

2. **Ask the students what stereotypes they have of Americans.**

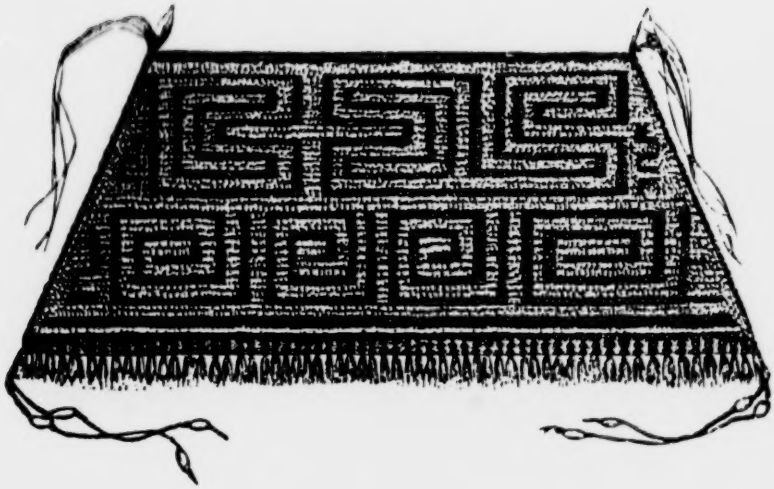
Students are often reluctant to begin, fearing they might offend you. So it might be helpful to give a couple of examples. Again, the responses should be written up where everyone can see them. At the conclusion of this technique there is a list of stereotypical statements I have sometimes used.

Another variation is to have the students draw only a picture which shows a stereotype of an American. These are posted for everyone to see.

3. **Post a large sheet of paper for each country represented in the class. Ask the students to write or draw stereotypes for each others' countries.**

At this point in the exercise, the students are usually beginning to feel what it is like to be stereotyped, and they show their feelings through laughter and astonishment that others could think such things about their cultures. I have never had anyone get angry -- probably because everyone is a "victim."

If the students are all from the same country, ask them to identify stereotypes that exist within their own culture.



Synthesis

4. Lead a discussion based on these questions:

a. What do you think about what others wrote or drew about your country?

b. How did you feel when you saw these comments about your country?

c. Why do you think stereotypes exist?

d. How are stereotypes destroyed?

Be sure to distinguish think in question a. and feel in question b.

If all the students are from the same culture, change question a. to: "What do you think about this list?" and "Do you have any thoughts about what we have written? If so, what?" And change questions b. to: "How did you feel as we were making this list?"

STEREOTYPES

Americans are rich

wear cowboy boots and eat hotdogs and hamburgers

drive big cars

shout a lot

are very aggressive

have superficial relationships

do not care about old people

do not care about family relationships

lack discipline

always think everything American is best

are disrespectful of age and status

talk a lot but say little

think only about money

do not know anything about the rest of the world

worry more about their possessions than their children

are friendly

10. The First Days

Thinking back on the first week of living in the U.S., the students discuss the thoughts and feelings, circumstances and people that initially affected them. This is followed by a discussion of attitudes and actions that can help one be more comfortable and in control in new and unfamiliar cultural situations.

Objectives

To become aware that our initial interaction with a situation can affect our future relationship with it.

To identify actions and attitudes that help create comfort and relaxation and the ability to stay in control in new and unfamiliar cultural circumstances.

Procedure

1. **Ask the students to reflect on their first week in the U.S.**

   I ask the students to think about and write some brief notes on the following questions about their first week of living in the U.S.:

   a. What situation(s) or circumstance(s) do you especially remember?

   b. Were there any people who had a particular effect on you? Who were they? What affect did they have?

c. What feelings and thoughts did you have the first week you were in the U.S.?

d. Did you do anything that first week that helped you feel and act more comfortable and relaxed? What?

Another option for Step 1 is to give the students the questions a few days before this technique is done in class. This will give them more time to think about the questions.

2. The students discuss their responses to the four questions.

It is important that the students not take too much class time with lengthy tales of their experiences. Encourage those who give personal examples to be brief and to the point. As the one leading this discussion, I try to keep the objective of this exercise clearly in everybody's mind.

Synthesis

3. The students make concluding statements based on the objectives of this exercise.

I conclude this exercise by leading a discussion on the following two questions:

a. What effect has your initial experience in the U.S. had on the rest of the time you have been here?

b. Imagine that next week you are going to a country you have never been to before. You do not speak the language of that country very well. What could you do and what attitudes could you have that would help you in this situation?

11.

Artifacts

The students examine a collection of cultural artifacts and try to understand what they represent. The process of trying to understand another culture is examined.

Objectives

To practice the skill of observation.

To practice entering another culture by looking for the meaning behind cultural artifacts.

To examine how meaning is ascribed.

Procedure

1. **The students enter a room where a variety of artifacts from one culture have been put in various spots around the room.**

   This step can be likened to entering a museum where the exhibits are unlabeled. It is preferable for the artifacts to come from a culture that is unfamiliar to the students. It may be a culture that you have lived in or known, or one that a resource person (someone who is not part of the class) is familiar with.

   The artifacts should be objects that will allow the students to gain some insight into the culture. Some possibilities are: clothing, jewelry, toys, photos of people, tools, utensils, arts and crafts, symbols, emblems, photos of dwellings and key crops and foods.

2. **The students walk around the room, surveying all the objects and then select one they would like to study.**

   Two students can choose the same object as long as they study it separately. Two different interpretations can be a useful point of discussion.

3. **The students study their objects for five minutes. I encourage them to ask themselves such questions as:**

   a. **What kind of society does it come from?**

   b. **What meaning does it hold for the people of this culture?**

   c. **What is my reaction to this object?**

   d. **How would I describe it?**

   The purpose of this step is to give the students some guidance and also allow them to explore their objects in whatever way they choose.

   I sometimes put the study questions, such as those listed above, on the board.

It is important to tell the students they will have an opportunity to ask and receive answers to their specific questions at the end of the exercise.

4. **The class sits in a circle, each student with his object. Each student has one or two minutes to report to the others his experience with the object -- any thoughts, feelings and questions.**

   The length of time I give to the students will depend on their language proficiency.

   You may need to encourage some students with a few questions. These may be helpful:

   a. What were you thinking as you looked at your object?

   b. Did you have any particular feelings?

   c. What ideas did this object give you about the people who use/made it?

   d. Did it remind you of anything in your own culture?

   At this point, some students may want to ask specific questions. You may have to help them stay on the subject of their own experience.

5. **The teacher asks the group to put the pieces together to make a comprehensive picture of the culture. The two key questions are:**

   a. **Describe the culture these artifacts come from.**

   b. **How did you arrive at these conclusions?**

   Tackle the questions one at a time. I record the responses to the first question on the board or large sheets of paper so everyone can see them. It is not important if responses are dissimilar or contradictory.

   The second question may be difficult for students to understand. It might be helpful if you ask a specific question. For example, "Misako, you think that art is important to

the people of this culture. Why do you think that is true?" or "Yousef, you said you think the people of this culture are poor. Why?"

The students may have differences of opinion, and there should be an opportunity to discuss the differences. It is important in this step to help the students see how they gave meaning to the objects and to the culture.

6. **The students have an opportunity to ask their specific questions regarding the objects and the culture.**

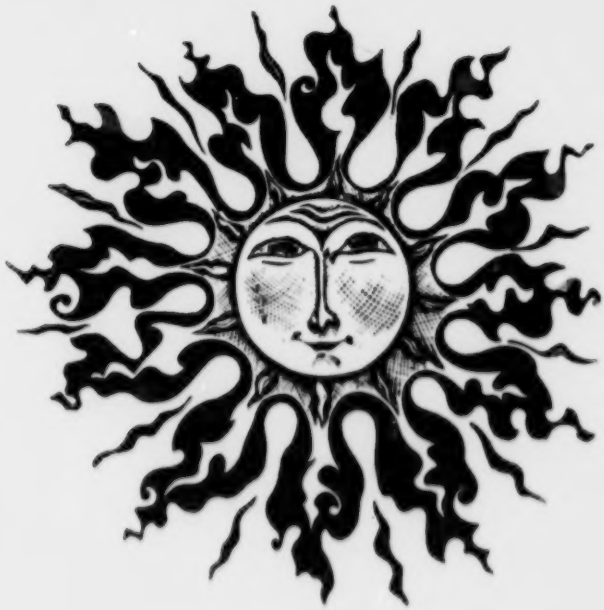
The purpose of this step is for the students to receive answers to their questions -- it is not a time to see who was "right" and who was "wrong."

Synthesis

7. **Hold a brief discussion on this question: What did you learn from doing this exercise?**

A good starting point for the discussion is to restate the objectives of the technique and ask the students if they were able to search for and ascribe meaning without becoming judgemental.

12.



Cultural Scene

The students observe a short skit and then try to understand what happened from a cultural point of view.

Objectives

To practice observation skills.

To investigate the way meaning is ascribed.

Procedure

1. **Three or four students from the same culture enact a scene from their culture while others in the class observe.**

If you do not have three or four students from the same culture in your class, or the students are all from one culture, invite some Americans to enact a scene. Family life would be a good topic. Sample scenes might be: Dinner table, a teenager asking for the car keys or getting back late from a date, visit from a neighbor.

A scene should be about five minutes, and for whoever performs, it is important to remember that the purpose is not to trick the observers or make the relationships and interactions too obvious. Rather, the purpose is to provide practice in observing and understanding the relationship between observing and interpreting.

An alternative to a cultural scene is a simulated culture. A scenario is given below.

2. **When the skit is over lead a discussion in which the following questions are asked of the observers:**

   a. **What happened?**

   b. **What is your interpretation of what you saw?**

   It is best to ask these two questions together because observation and interpretation are inter-related. It might help the discussion if you ask the observers to talk about the scene in chronological order. Alternatively, you might want to ask the questions and give the observers a few minutes to write responses.

   The written responses are not to be handed in; they are used as notes during the discussion.

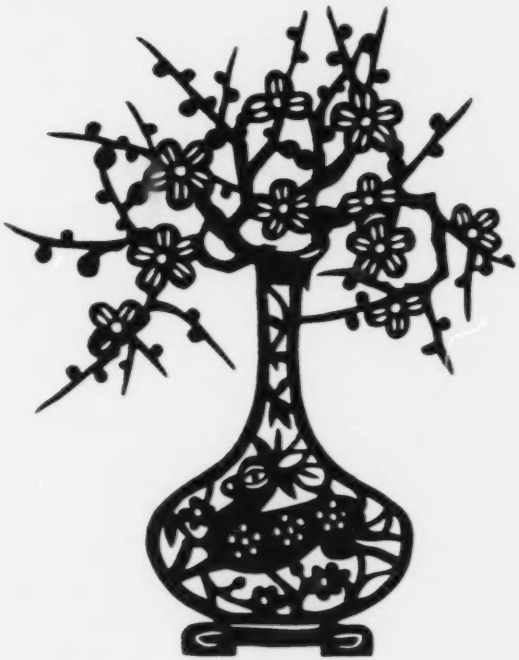
   The performers are asked to listen. At this point they should not respond to what the observers say.

3. **The observers ask the performers questions about the skit.**

   Two kinds of questions are often asked: those that can be relatively easily answered -- "Was the father angry at the daughter in

the scene?" and those that cannot -- "Why do you greet each other in that way?"

The second kind of question is often a "why" question that can often be answered only with "It's our culture; it's the way we do things." The questioner is often dissatisfied with this answer, so if you know something about the culture of the questioner, you might ask him a few "why" questions. This often shows that such questions are not easily answered.



Synthesis

4. Discuss these two questions:

a. Some of you saw things that others did not see. Some of you made different interpretations of the scene. Why?

b. What is the effect of judging another culture as "strange," "wrong," or "funny?"

A SCENARIO

General Briefing

This exercise involves two male-female couples. It is more effective if male students play the roles of males and likewise for the females. However, if your class does not include at least two males or females, it can be done by having males play the roles of females or vice versa.

There are two cultures involved. Couple A are from Country X and Couple B assume their own cultural identities. It may work a little better if Couple B are both from the same culture, e.g. both Brazilians, but if that is not possible the two students playing Couple B represent a culturally-mixed marriage, e.g. an Italian married to a Swiss.

The two couples are instructed separately. They are given the briefing sheets and asked to study them for a few minutes before beginning the role play.

*Adapted from "The Owl" by Theodore Gochenour in Beyond Experience, Donald Batchelder and Elizabeth G. Warner, eds., The Experiment Press, Brattleboro, VT., 1977, pp. 125-129.

Briefing Sheet #1 - Country X

You are a member of Country X, an ancient land which has been isolated from the rest of the world. X-ians have a way of life which has not changed for many years.

In Country X, women are the natural leaders, administrators, heads of households, principal artists, owners of wealth and rulers of the state. Men rarely work outside the home. They keep house, cook and care for the children. Education is very important for the women. Many women have a university education. Among men, education is not important. Women know they are superior to men.

X-ian women have become famous for the design and care of flower gardens. In Country X the Queen's Garden is open once a year on her birthday to women only, to celebrate the natural process of growth and rebirth. No foreigners have been able to observe the Queen's Garden Festival, although there is no law to prevent foreigners from attending.

X-ians do not like prolonged eye contact. They look at other people with brief glances during conversation. In Country X, it is very impolite and aggressive to "stare."

You are an X-ian couple. Mr. and Mrs. Alef. Mrs. Alef is the Director of Cultural Affairs. Mrs. Alef is on an official trip to Athens, and she has brought her husband along for a brief vacation from his housekeeping duties. You have been seen by a foreign journalist couple. Mrs. Alef met them very briefly several years ago.

When speaking English to the foreigners, you must limit your vocabulary to words of only one or two syllables and short simple sentences. You have difficulty comprehending rapid spoken English. Mr. Alef's English is, in fact, very poor. The reason, of course, is that English is a foreign language and you rarely use it at home. You may speak X-ian with each other. The foreign couple will ask for your permission to attend

the next Queen's Garden Festival. They will talk to you for about fifteen minutes. Then they will excuse themselves for a few minutes and return to ask permission.

Mrs. Alef must decide to say "yes" or "no." There are three things to consider. Basically, she should decide "yes" if the foreigners have shown cultural sensitivity to what X-ians are like. Look for these things:

1. The foreign woman only must ask for permission and she must ask Mrs. Alef. The men in the role-play must not be involved in the request.

2. You must decide how thoughtful the foreigners have been about your limited English. If they have adjusted their language to your level, this will be one factor in a "yes" decision.

3. The foreigners must also show sensitivity to your custom of little eye contact. If they have "stared" at you during the conversation, your answer should be "no."

Briefing Sheet #2

You are two well-known journalists. You are a married couple. Both of you have spent several years in international travel reporting on political, cultural and artistic subjects in a number of countries.

You have just seen two people in a restaurant in Athens. You met them once before very briefly. You do not remember their names, but you do remember that they are from Country X, an unusual place, rarely visited by foreigners.

You are aware that Country X is known for its highly developed arts, especially landscape gardens. Once a year there is a great festival called the X-ian Queen's Garden Festival. But no foreigner has actually seen or photographed the festival. It would be a journalistic "coup" if you could do so.

In this exercise, you will approach the X-ians at their restaurant table and ask to join them. Then, after about fifteen minutes find an excuse to leave them. Decide the best way to ask permission to visit the Festival and do a story with photographs.

After your decision is made, return to the table and make your request. You will receive a "yes" or "no" answer.

13.

Family Life

The students observe and participate in a role-play that centers on family life in the U.S.

Objectives

To give the students the opportunity to compare U.S. family life and their own cultures.

To consider techniques that might be helpful in bridging the gap between "outsider" and "member."

Family Life

Procedure

1. **Explain to the class that some Americans have been invited to the class to role-play some scenes that might happen in a U.S. family.**

   Prepare your actors to role-play two or three scenes from U.S. family life. Some examples might be: Eating and cleaning up after a meal, spending the evening at home, going out for a meal, going to a party at a friend's house, a visit from the grandparents, etc. Ask the players to be as natural as possible in their speech and behavior. Explain that there will be a foreign guest in the scene. Each scene should be about 10 minutes.

2. **Ask one student to volunteer to participate in each of the scenes. Ask the students who are watching to note any new words or expressions they hear.**

   Introduce each scene by telling the students who the characters are and where and when the scene takes place. Explain that the students who volunteer to be part of the scene are foreign visitors to a U.S. family.

   If you want several students to have the chance to participate in the role-play, you can stop a scene half way through and ask a new student to take over.

3. **After the role-play is over, ask the students to meet in small groups and talk about these questions:**

   a. **What new words or expressions did you hear?**

   b. **What observations can you make about the family life you saw in the role-plays?**

   c. **How does this family compare with your own?**

   d. **How did the "guest" feel in the scenes?**

If you do not have enough time, skip this step and go on to Step 4. The reason for having the students meet in small groups first is to allow everyone to make comments.

It would be helpful to give the students a few minutes after each scene to write down their thoughts.

The purpose for the first question is not only to work on vocabulary, but also to get the discussion started. The purpose of the second question is to ask the students to make some observations about U.S. family life and to work on the distinction between observations and interpretation. The last question gives them the opportunity to think about becoming part of a new culture and entering unknown situations.

Synthesis

4. The entire group discusses the questions in Step 3. Each small group can summarize its answers through a spokesperson.

It may be interesting to consider the similarities and differences among the small group summaries.

5. Ask the students to consider this question:

What can you do to become more of a member of the host culture?

14.

Nonverbal Communication

Using short skits, the students explore the nature and importance of nonverbal communication.

Objective

To introduce the students to the nature and importance of nonverbal communication.

To teach some appropriate nonverbal responses and attitudes.

Procedure

1. **Briefly introduce the nature of nonverbal communication.**

   You can use the outline at the end of this lesson as the basis for a short talk to the class. In many cases, the students can supply examples of the kinds of nonverbal signals and behavior in the outline.

   Another kind of introduction is a short role-play. Have a friend come to class to stage a conversation with you. Then ask the class to tell you what they know about the two people (sex, age, relationship) and how they know this. Then lead into a discussion of what nonverbal communication is.

2. Explain to the class that everyone will be involved in enacting some short scenes.

If the class is multicultural, ask the students to work in their own nationality groups to enact scenes from their own culture, using their own language.

If the class is monocultural, ask them to work together in two or three small groups to enact scenes from their own culture or from U.S. culture. If you can, invite two or three people from a culture different from your students', and give these visitors the same assignment. This will allow you to have another group as a contrast.

Within the work groups the students need to determine the appropriate nonverbal behavior for each situation and decide who will enact the situations (encourage all the students to be involved in at least one).

3. Give the students directions and time enough to prepare.

Some scenes that I have used are:

a. Mother and father greeting a teenage son after a separation of about six months.

b. Greeting one's grandmother/grandfather.

c. Two friends of the same age greet each other after one of them returns from having been away.

d. A friend sharing sad news with another friend.

Whichever situations are used, allow for male-to-male, female-to-female and mixed interaction.

4. The students enact the scenes.

If you can video-tape the scenes, the tape can be used in the next step.

5. **Ask the students for their observations.**

   I ask the students to confine their comments to nonverbal behavior (physical contact, eye contact, distance, facial expressions, etc.). You might also want to ask them to comment on the tone and volume of speech of the role-players.

6. **Ask the students for their observations of nonverbal communication that they have observed outside of class. Pursue this topic with the following questions:**

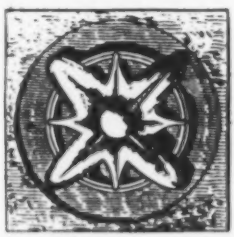
   a. **What new nonverbal communication responses have you learned to use comfortably?**

   b. **What new nonverbal communication responses are you comfortable using? Why?**

   This step will give the students an opportunity to talk about their personal experiences with U.S. culture.

   In Question B., it is important to ask "why" because this question will help the students increase their awareness of specific nonverbal behavior in the target culture.

   For a photographic study of selected American gestures, see The ESL Miscellany, Second Edition, Pro Lingua Associates, pp. 273-284.



Synthesis

7. **Summarize by asking the students to write a short definition of nonverbal communication.**

AN OUTLINE OF PARALINGUISTIC COMMUNICATION

A. **Sounds**
   1. Individual sounds
      a. fricatives -- Shh!
      b. nasals -- Mmmm.
      c. trills -- Brrr!
      d. clicks and stops -- tsk tsk. Pst!
   2. Emotional intonation
      a. surprise
      b. fear
      c. anger
      d. sarcasm
      e. mockery
      f. complaint
      g. persuasion
      h. flirtation
      i. intimacy
      j. pleasure
   3. Exclamations and interjections
   4. Voice qualities and styles
      a. whisper
      b. baby talk
      c. falsetto
   5. Whistling
   6. Humming
   7. Yelling
   8. Laughing
   9. Crying
   10. Coughing

B. **Body language** (Kinesics)
   1. Facial expressions
   2. Eye contact
   3. Gestures
   4. Touching (Haptics)

C. **Other areas of paralinguistic communication**
   1. Silence
   2. Time
   3. Space and distance (Proxemics)

from The ESL Miscellany, Pro Lingua Associates, p. 263.

15.

Empathy

The students read and discuss a short passage in which cultural differences cause a communication problem.

Objectives

To practice empathy by identifying cultural perspectives.

To look for ways to improve intercultural communication.

Procedure

1. **The students read a sketch in which there is a difference in cultural perspective.**

   Two examples are given below. Using them as models, you can write one yourself that is more relevant to your students' circumstances. You may want to choose a sketch that involves a culture represented by someone in your class, so that if some culture-specific information is needed in the discussion that follows, it can be given by someone in the group.

2. Lead the students in a discussion of the sketch.

These are the questions that I use in leading the discussion:

a. What are _____'s thoughts and feelings about this situation?

b. What are _____'s thoughts and feelings about this situation?

c. What is the problem?

d. What suggestions would you give to _____ for resolving this problem?

e. What suggestions would you give to the other person for resolving this problem?

The purpose of this discussion is to establish the two cultural points of view, to identify the problem or conflict and to make suggestions for improved communication and relationships across cultures. It is helpful to write the students' responses on the board or on large pieces of paper to refer to throughout the discussion.

Synthesis

3. Lead the students in a summary discussion based on the following two questions:

a. What is empathy?

b. Why is it important in intercultural relationships?

Because each sketch involves a different situation and different people, this exercise can be repeated two or three times. Each time, the skill of empathy is being strengthened.

From Webster's New World Dictionary: empathy the projection of one's own personality into the personality of another in order to understand him better; ability to share in another's emotions or feelings.

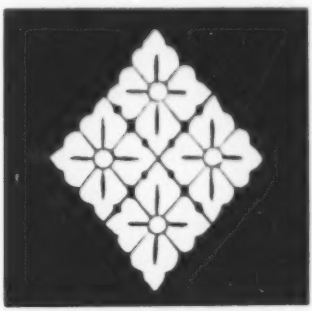
SKETCH

On the Job

Thin Lo, who is from Vietnam, has lived in the U.S. for four years. For the past year and a half, she has been working as an assembly worker for the ACP Electronics Company. Her supervisor is an American named Jim Black.

Thin likes her job and is a very good worker, but she is upset with her supervisor. Jim continues to have weekly meetings with the 12 assembly people in his department. All of them are from Asian countries. He keeps asking them for suggestions for increasing production and for better work conditions. She thinks this is a waste of the company's time because this is the supervisor's job, not the workers' job.

On the other hand, Jim has been increasingly discouraged lately. He wants his workers to feel a part of a team. But when he tries to include them by asking for suggestions, usually no one says anything.



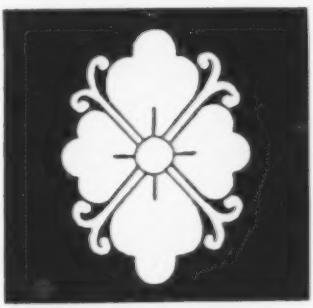
SKETCH

At the University

Hiroshi is a junior at a small U.S. university. He studied English for many years in Japan, and now he speaks the language very well. He is a very good student and enjoys most of his classes. But there is one class he is taking this semester that has upset him.

In the class, there are only 14 students, and they are all American except for Hiroshi. They spend most of the class time in discussions led by the professor. Hiroshi wants to drop this course because the students seem impolite and self-centered. They aren't interested in the ideas and opinions of each person because they interrupt and argue with each other. Also, they don't try to reach a group consensus.

The American students in the class are beginning to think that Hiroshi either can't speak English very well or that he doesn't have many ideas because he never says anything in class. They don't want to be rude, but they are starting to ignore him in their discussions.



16.

Interview

Each student interviews a native speaker and then the class compares notes on the information and attitudes expressed during the interviews.

Objective

To look for the similarities and universals that underlie different cultures.

Procedure

1. **Hand out the questionnaires and explain to the students that they are to interview a person from the U.S.**

   There is a sample questionnaire given at the end of this lesson.

This interview can be done as homework or during class time. Of course, if it is done during class time, you will have to invite some native speakers to the class. For best results, there should be one student to one native speaker.

Encourage the students to write down the information gathered. This can be done in note form during the interview or immediately following the interview.

It might be helpful if the students each had a small map of the U.S. to take with them on the interview.

2. **After the interviews have been conducted, discuss the information gathered.**

   Discuss the questions on the questionnaire one at a time. First ask the students to talk about what their interviewees said. Second, ask the students to compare this information with their own cultures. Encourage the students not to make judgements about one point of view being "better" than another.

   Be sure to have a world map in the classroom or an individual map for each country represented in your class.

3. **Ask the students these questions about the interviewing process and the preceding discussion:**

   a. **Were you surprised by anything that the person you interviewed said? What? Why?**

   b. **Was it easy or difficult to answer the questions about your own culture?**

   c. **What did you learn about your ability to communicate in English?**

   While Step 2 is designed to compare cultural information, Step 3 gives the students the opportunity to talk about the process of the interview.

Synthesis

4. **Hand out and/or read the passage below and ask the students for their reactions to it.**

Oh, East is East, and West is West, and
never the twain shall meet,
Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's
great Judgement Seat;
But there is neither East nor West, Border,
nor Breed, nor Birth,
When two strong men stand face to face,
tho' they come from the ends of the earth!

The refrain above is from "The Ballad of East and West" by Rudyard Kipling.

QUESTIONNAIRE

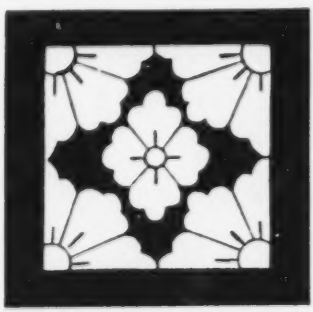
1. Where are the concentrations of population in the U.S. and why do people want to live in certain areas and not in others?

2. Why do you live where you do?

3. What is your definition of the good life?

4. What are the two greatest problems facing our world today?

5. What is something positive that has happened in our world in the past year?



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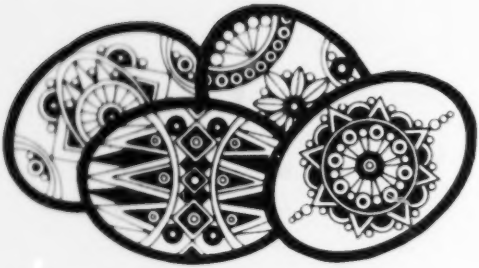


Town Survey

The class visits a local community to gather information. Back in the classroom they share their information and discuss how they got it.

Objectives

To gather information about a specific community and how the inhabitants see their own community.

To identify skills and attitudes helpful for entering and understanding a new culture.

Procedure

1. **Explain to the class that they will be going to a community to collect some information which will be reported back to the rest of the class.**

   If your class is located in a city, choose a specific area to be investigated. Be sure the students are clear about geographical limits. You may want to provide each of them with a map. I often choose an area the students either live in or visit fairly frequently.

   To set the stage, you might want to read the excerpt at the end of this lesson.

2. **Show the class a list of categories to be investigated and ask each student to choose a category.**

   Here are some suggested categories: Education, recreation, health services, social services, economic enterprises, government. If you choose to do technique 18, School visit, you may not want to include education among your categories, saving it for the school visit.

   Set a limit on how many students can work with each category. I have found pairs to work well, although sometimes a student may want to work alone. If you are in a large city, different small groups can work on the same category within different geographical areas.

   If you have a culturally mixed class, encourage students from different cultures to work together.

3. **Prepare the students with a list of questions to be asked as they investigate the categories.**

   You can provide them with a questionnaire or, better yet, ask them to frame their own questionnaire. Encourage them to include not only questions that have factual answers, but also questions that will reveal local attitudes and opinions about the community.

4. **Set a time limit for the survey and a specific time to be back in class.**

   A good time span seems to be about three hours. If your class meets only a few hours a week, you can either give this assignment as homework or cancel a couple of your regular classes and have the students do this assignment at a time that is convenient for them.

5. **Tell the students that there will be a five minute report for each of the categories investigated.**

   Remind the students to take some notes during the investigation and encourage them to bring material back with them (brochures, bulletins, pamphlets, etc.).

6. **After the survey the students plan and give their presentations.**

   Setting a time limit on presentations is important. It helps the students be concise and keeps the reporting from being long and drawn out. You may want to give the students some suggestions on summarizing the information.

   Thirty to forty minutes is usually enough time for the presentations. Encourage the students to display any material that has been collected. After the survey, I often leave this material posted in the classroom and try to use it in future lessons.

   You can request that all the students in a group give part of the oral report or that the group choose one spokesperson. If two or more small groups have investigated a single category, I would suggest they summarize all their information for just one final report.

Synthesis

7. **Pose these questions for discussion:**

   a. **How did you get the information you wanted?**

   b. **What helped you get the information and what did not help very much?**

c. **How did you feel about collecting the information?**

d. **When you first arrived in the U.S. did you use any of these same tactics in trying to understand what was happening around you and in trying to understand what you were supposed to do? Did you have any of the same feelings?**

In questions a. and b. you are trying to help the students identify how they gather information in a new situation. The students may not understand what you are asking because the questions seem very simplistic. In question a. for example, the students may respond, "I asked questions." Help them be more specific. You might ask, "Did you first introduce yourself?" "Did you explain the class project as a way of introduction?" "Did you walk into a place and spend a little time observing before going up to talk to someone?" "How did you choose a person to talk to?"

In question b. help the students identify not only their own behavior but their own attitudes as well.

Question c. gives the students an opportunity to talk about what it felt like to meet new people and ask for information and help.

Write up the students' responses to the first three questions so these can be used as a bridge to the final question.

This last question is not meant to be a "yes" or "no" question. Ask it and give the students a chance to think about their responses while re-reading what they have said to the first three questions.

8. **Use the reading below as a conclusion to the exercise if you don't use it in Step 2.**

READING

In the following excerpt the author is in the interior of Brazil. He has just reached his destination and he is telling somebody about his trip.

> ...I named the hamlet (where I had just come from). "Did they show you the rock marking the center of the world?" he asked. I assured him they had. "My grandfather came from there," he said. "The exact center. Everyone around here has always known about it."
>
> The import of the rock marking the center of the world took a while to filter through. I had initially doubted their claim, knowing for a fact that the center was located somewhere in New England. After all, my grandfather had come from there. But gradually I realized they had a valid belief, a universal concept, and I agreed with them. We tend to define the center as that special place where we are known, where we know others, where things mean much to us, and where we ourselves have both identity and meaning; family, school, town and local region. The lesson which gradually filtered through was the simple concept that every place has special meanings for the people in it; every place represents the center of the world. The number of such centers is incalculable, and no one student or traveler can experience all of them, but once a conscious breakthrough to a second center is made, a life-long perspective and collection can begin.

An excerpt from "The Green Banana" by Donald Batchelder. Beyond Experience, The Experiment Press, Brattleboro, VT., 1977. P. 138.

18. School Visit

The students visit a school and then discuss their observations.

Objectives

To give the students an opportunity to deepen their understanding of one sociocultural institution -- education in the U.S.

To compare and contrast various educational systems and philosophies.

Procedure

1. **Explain the structure of the U.S. educational system.**

   An example of how this information might be presented visually is given at the end of the lesson. The simpler your explanation, the more helpful it will be in Steps 2 and 3 when the students have to do the same.

2. **Give the students large pieces of paper and ask them to illustrate the educational systems in their countries.**

   If you have more than one student from a particular country, ask them to work together

in drawing the educational systems in their country. If you have a monocultural class, have the whole class discuss and agree on a visual and decide who will draw it.

3. Ask each student to give a brief explanation of the system in his country.

It is important to emphasize to the students that there will be a definite time limit to the explanations. I suggest three minutes. They are not to give details, but they should follow your example in Step 1. Allow time after each presentation for others in the class to ask questions.

If your class is all from one culture, ask the class to choose a spokesperson. The explanation, in this case, would be given to you.

4. Explain the arrangements for the school visit.

I have found that both elementary and high schools are very interested in hosting foreign students. It is helpful if there is one person at the school who is responsible for making all the arrangements and for communicating with you.

There are a variety of ways these visits can be set up; the following are examples suitable for high school visits. Each of your students can be assigned a "buddy" at the host school, in which case the pair stays together throughout the visit. Or, the contact person at the school can arrange a schedule for each of your students, giving them an opportunity to visit a few different classes.

Sometimes a request is made by language teachers for your students to be a part of language classes. This has worked well only when the students also have an opportunity to visit other subject matter classes, as well.

In visiting elementary classes, the students have stayed in one class or have been divided

among a few classes. They have participated in whatever way the host teacher felt was suitable.

A high school visit, because of the opportunity to visit a variety of different classes can last from three hours to an entire school day. Three hours is a good length of time for an elementary school visit.

5. **Hand out the observation questions.**

   There is a sample guideline given at the end of the lesson. Go over the questions to be sure they are clear. These questions are not meant to be asked directly, but are to be used as guides in observing. The exception to this is Question 5.

Synthesis

6. **After the visit, take the questions one at a time, asking the students to comment on what they observed, and to compare their observations with their own educational experiences.**

   Before the discussion begins, give the students a chance to write a few notes about their observations on each question. It might be best to first discuss their observations and then make comparisons. Watch for the tendency to judge one system over another or to make broad statements after only a short visit to one school.

7. **Ask the students to summarize their experience by thinking or writing about this question:**

   Compare one aspect of the U.S. educational system with that of your own country. For this one aspect, what are the strengths and weaknesses of the two systems.

School Visit

OBSERVATION GUIDELINE

1. How would you describe the relationship between
   - teachers and students?

   - students with each other?

2. In what ways (reading, discussion, games, writing, etc.) are the students learning?

3. How would you describe the general atmosphere of the classroom?

4. How do you think the students feel about being in school? Why do you have this opinion?

5. What subjects do the students study? Do they have homework? How much? Do they have tests? How often?

U.S. EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Name of School	Grade	Age of Students	Subjects
Nursery		4	Games, songs, creative playing
Kindergarten	K	5	Games, drawing, crafts, beginning reading & writing
Primary or Elementary	1	6	Reading, writing, spelling, adding, drawing, singing
	2	7	Language arts, subtraction, spelling, drawing, singing
	3	8	Language arts, social studies, multiplication
	4	9	Language arts, social studies, division
	5	10	Language arts, history, geography, fractions
	6	11	Language arts, history, geography, decimals, science
Junior High	7	12	Language arts, history, geography, algebra, science, foreign language, manual arts, home economics
	8	13	Language arts, history, geography, geometry, science, foreign language, manual arts, home economics
High School	9 Freshman	14	College Prep: English, Math, Science, Physical, Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Foreign Lang. Spanish, French Vocational: English, Economics, Civics, Math, Shop, Home Economics Business: English, Bookkeeping, Civics, Math, Typing
	10 Sophomore	15	
	11 Junior	16	
	12 Senior	17	
Junior College (2 yrs)	Freshman	18	English, foreign language, history, biology, physical science, sociology or psychology, physical education, ROTC
	Sophomore	19	
College or University (4 yrs) (undergraduate)	Junior	20	Courses in major and minor fields
	Senior	21	
Graduate or Professional School	MA	22-	One-year plus thesis
	PhD		Three years plus dissertation

19.

Cultural Adjustment

Each student identifies stages and changes in his process of adjustment to living in the U.S. The results are shared and discussed.

Objective

To aid the students in gaining perspective on their process of adjustment to new cultures.

Procedure

1. **The students silently recall their stay in the U.S. from the beginning to the present.**

   Before beginning the recall, it is helpful to suggest that each person write down the significant events or situations that they remember. Also ask the students to recall the thoughts and feelings they had at various times during the period of their stay. At this point, what they write does not have to be in any kind of order. The purpose of this initial step is to bring alive past experience.

During the silent recall, you might want to play some background music. Try the first two movements from Dvorak's "New World Symphony."

2. **The students identify the STAGES they have gone through in their adjustment to living in the U.S.**

   This is usually not an easy task, and the students often need guidance. "Stages" are periods when there are attitudes, feelings and behavior that prevail through a period of time.

   Two examples of student responses to this step are given at the end of the lesson. You may want to use these as aids to illustrate the concept of stages. Encourage each student to label each stage with a word or two and to make simple statements that represent the stage. Make crayons, magic markers and large pieces of paper available.

3. **Ask the students to identify what caused the changes in attitude, feelings and behavior from one stage to another.**

   The causes can be summarized in a list. There is a typical student list given at the end of this lesson.

4. **The students meet in small groups to share the stages and changes they identified in Steps 2 and 3.**

   Once this sharing is complete, I often ask all the students to post their work so that everyone will have an opportunity to look at the various responses. I usually ask for any general observations.

   At the time of doing this exercise, the students will probably be at different stages in their adjustment. Some may be at a stage of "acceptance" while others may be "angry" or "lonely". It is valuable to point this out to the class.

You might want to compare the students' stages of cultural adjustment with the stages of cultural awareness and intercultural adjustment skills outlined in the introduction to this book.

5. **The students discuss in the large group their responses to Steps 2 and 3.**

   Guide the students away from giving detailed accounts of their experiences in Step 3. Some circumstantial explanation may be necessary to explain what caused a change in behavior, feelings and attitude, but help the students be brief and precise. It is very helpful to write these "causes of change" on the board and at the end of the discussion of this step, to ask again for general observations.

   The value of discussing Steps 2 and 3 in the large group is that the participants have the opportunity to hear each others' experiences and to see that adjustment is a process.

Synthesis

6. **Ask the students to answer this summary question:**

   What have you learned about your ability to live in another culture?

   This step can be done orally, but it might be better to give it as a writing assignment.

   To give them some guidance, you could ask them to make their statements in two parts:

   a. What do you do that helps the adjustment process?

   b. What do you do that hinders the adjustment process?

EXAMPLES OF STAGES OF ADJUSTMENT

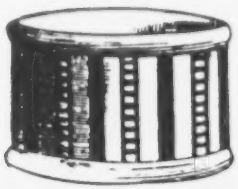
(Step Two)

STUDENT ONE

Label	**Statement**
a. interest and excitement	a. "everything is new and interesting"
b. impatience	b. "Why do they have to do things this way?"
c. acceptance	c. "What is right for me may not be right for the other person."
d. questioning	d. "What are my true values?"
e. finding my place	e. "How can I live here and keep my own identity?"

STUDENT TWO

Label	**Statement**
a. observer	a. "I can learn by watching."
b. confusion	b. "Who am I in this new place?"
c. anger	c. "How can I be myself and live in a place that is so very different?"



STUDENT RESPONSES

To the Question:
What caused the change(s) in attitude and behavior from one stage to another? (Step Three)

Thinking/reflection

Observation/watching

Asking questions about the new culture and about myself

Trying new things

Understanding my own culture

Learning and practicing more language

Time

Learning more about U.S. culture

Acceptance

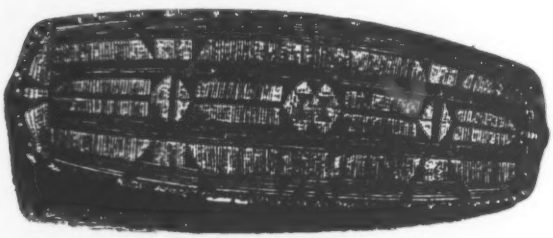
Contact with people

Desire to learn and adapt

Empathy

Identifying my values

Being nonjudgemental



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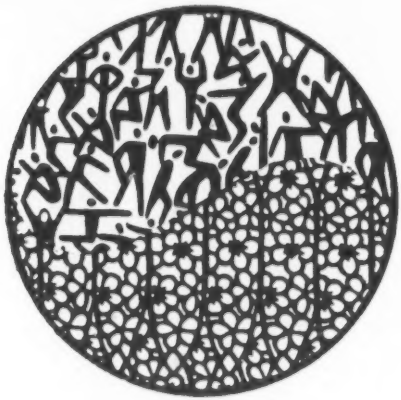

Summing Up

The students summarize their intercultural experiences in writing and discuss the next phase of their lives.

Objectives

To give the students the opportunity to summarize their intercultural experience and learning.

To help the students prepare for the next step--staying on or going home.

Procedure

1. **Hand out a set of study questions and ask the students to write their responses.**

   Hand out the questions a few days before you plan to have the class discussion, and ask that each question be answered in writing. Go over each question with the students to be sure they understand what is being asked.

   Two samples are included below--one for students who are going to return to their own countries and one for students who are going to stay in the U.S.

2. **Ask the students to share their responses to each question.**

   The structure of this exercise is fairly simple, but the nature of the questions and the students' personal responses will allow for an in-depth discussion. I have found that students generally appreciate an opportunity to speak about their frustrations and successes. Because of the personal nature of the questions, though, the students should always be given the option of not answering in a large group. Sometimes there may be a hesitation to begin, but after the first few people have spoken, almost everyone will want to offer something from his own experience.

Synthesis

3. **Ask each student to describe the next step (staying on, going home, new job, etc.) he is going to take and what he expects to be easy and difficult.**

   You might also want to take this opportunity to have the students evaluate the techniques you have used.

4. **Ask the students to read and reflect on the quote from Gandhi at the end of this technique.**

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS REMAINING IN THE U.S.

1. What is the biggest adjustment you have had to make living in the U.S.?

2. What are the most valuable aspects of your own culture?

3. What aspects of U.S. life are you interested in adopting?

4. What aspects of American culture have you found the hardest to live with?

5. What aspects of American culture have you most enjoyed?

6. What have been important things you have learned about your culture since you have come to the U.S.?

7. What do you miss the most about your native country?

8. If friends of yours were moving to the U.S., what would you tell them about this culture that might help them in their adjustment?

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS RETURNING HOME

1. What is the biggest adjustment you have had to make during your stay in the U.S.?

2. What are the most valuable aspects of your own culture that you would be unwilling to give up?

3. What aspects of American life would you be willing to adopt if you were staying in the U.S. now instead of returning home?

4. What aspects of American culture have you found the hardest to live with?

5. What aspects of American culture have you most enjoyed?

6. Do you think you will take anything of the U.S. culture back with you?

   What?

   Why?

7. What have been the two most important things you have learned about your culture?

8. What will be difficult about your return home?

9. What do you think you will remember most about your experience in the U.S.?

"I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any."

—*Mahatma Gandhi*

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